

The Federal Diary

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B9

# Nixon Proposes Supergrade Changes

By  
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President Nixon yesterday asked Congress to approve a total overhaul of the top civil service ranks that would eliminate grade-status levels and put top-paid career people under contract to their agencies.

His proposed Federal Executive Service envisions an elite corps of about 7,000 federal "supergrade" workers (GS 16 through 18). They would be screened before admittance, and could be fired after their three-year contracts were up. Grades would be eliminated and employees in the FES would be paid between \$28,000 and \$36,000, depending upon their qualifications.

Mr. Nixon assured Congress that the plan would not alter the political makeup of the top federal managerial ranks.

The President said no present supergrade employee would be forced into the FES. But its creation would hit every present or potential GS 16 through 18. Those who chose to remain outside the FES would be frozen in grade, while future promotions would go only to members of the new service.

All careerists would serve under three-year mutually renewable contracts. If the contract was not renewed by the agency, the employee could re-tire (if eligible), bounce back to Grade 15 with salary guaranteed for two years, or take severance pay and look for another job.

Grades would be abolished and instead executives would be ranked by salary and job. Agencies could set their own career-political mix, and salaries, subject to Civil Service Commission guidelines.

and then outline plans for more top-paying jobs, if needed. Congress would have 90 days to veto the plan, which otherwise would go into effect automatically.

Incumbent supergraders could stay outside the FES. But all new people coming into the \$28,000 a year or better career jobs would have to

join it. All would serve under three-year contracts. Political appointees, as they do now, would continue to serve at the pleasure of the agency head. The system would make it easier to shift executives to different jobs, and make agency trades possible.

New FES appointees would have to be cleared by a qualifications board which, it is said, would operate under strict merit principles. Present supergraders wouldn't have to pass this board to get in, but they would have to sign the 3-year contracts.

Civil Service Commission Chairman Robert E. Hampton says the FES is a must. He told a White House briefing session the present system is "inflexible" and hampers agency operations. "This would be more rank-in-man," he said, "with personal rank and status not necessarily related to position." He said it is impossible to grade executives along rigid lines.

Once the FES is operational, it would be possible for two men holding the same job in an agency to get different pay. Salaries would be set according to qualifications. How this arrangement would set with status-conscious bureaucrats is yet to be determined.

Hampton admitted that the FES would no doubt mean there would be more top-paying jobs created in government. Congress now allots them to agencies and CSC, but in the last five years has okayed only 170 new positions. Total agency requests have run more than a thousand.

Both the President and Hampton said the FES would maintain the present career-said it is now 75-25.

Although the FES plan will

think it will pass. They point out that most of the changes could have been made by administrative action, or executive order anyhow.

**Purple Pens, Unauthorized Use Of:** Without undue comment, we reprint in full the following notice to employees of the Naval Air Systems Command:

**"Attention All Hands—** When writing his comments, directives, notations, etc., Admiral Weitzenfeld, the new Vice Commander desires to use a **purple pen.**

**"The commander, Naval Air**

Systems Command will continue to use a **red pen.** Therefore, red ink or pencils and purple ink or pencils will not be used by other personnel of the command.

"For easy and rapid identification purposes, referral slips from the office of the Commander will be pink; those from the office of the Vice Commander will be yellow; vice green; and those from Assistant Commanders will be blue."

For the taxpayers sake, its a good thing some people can't design their own uniforms.

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## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Bill to Establish a Federal Executive Service

FROM: Office of Legislative Counsel 7 D 35 Headquarters		EXTENSION	NO.	
		DATE		
TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
	RECEIVED	FORWARDED		
1. Director of Personnel 5 E 56 Hqs.				1. Note exemption of CIA on page 5.
2.				2. Exempted agencies, however, are encouraged to adopt as much of the program as they can with the advice and assistance of the CSC (page 19). Note that though given an exemption, the FBI, under Paragraph 7702, Section 2. (2)(B) (page 25), may fix the pay of not over 140 positions, as deemed appropriate, within the pay scale of Grades 16-18.  3. A blanket exemption for CIA to clearly exclude the Agency from all provisions of the bill is being considered to avoid possible ambiguities. This would be advisable if a Federal Executive Service program is not determined feasible within CIA.
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Assistant Legislative Counsel

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